

# The last word Inaugural issue of *Jump Cut*

by the Editors

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Welcome to *JUMP CUT: A Review of Contemporary Cinema*. As you see from what you hold, we are using an extremely inexpensive format. Quite simply we are subsidizing it ourselves because we believe JUMP CUT should exist, and that what our writers have to say needs saying. By using this format we gain the opportunity to publish frequently enough to live up to our claim of being a review of contemporary cinema, freedom from the problems of institutional and patron interference and capitalist intent, and a low subscription cost that will allow our readers to subscribe for the price of a first run feature in a large city.

Beginning a new film publication has been an adventure, a discovery, and an exciting part of our lives for the last few months. We don't have a manifesto to present, but we do have some ideas, plans, and commitments we want to share with you.

It becomes increasingly obvious that film criticism in the U.S. is operating in a void that grows larger and larger and that this most modern of art forms relies on a particularly inadequate aesthetics. This is especially objectionable now that film has become so popular on and off campus. There is little satisfaction in seeing this booming interest in film when one surveys the new parade of coffee table books, plot summary analyses, vacuous interviews with this or that director, and so forth that passes for film criticism and scholarship.

We are calling ourselves a review of contemporary cinema not to ignore the past or operate in an historical vacuum, but because it is time to learn from what is actually going on and not to leave the vast area of current film to journalistic consumer guides (a necessary evil considering the high price of tickets today) and impressionistic reviewers, praised largely for their "sprightly style" everytime a new collection of their reviews comes out. Therefore, JUMP CUT will feature

full length, thoughtful reviews of current Hollywood, foreign, and independent films. We will also publish analytical articles on directors, current film trends, new theories and criticism, the latest books on film, reports on festivals, events and non-events, re-reviews of lost classics and over-rated turkeys, and (as you can see in this issue) contemporary analyses of cinema's history.

Understanding the variety and complexity of contemporary cinema requires fresh perspectives. JUMP CUT is committed to presenting and developing film criticism which recognizes theories often unfamiliar to Americans, such as structuralism, semiology, and Marxism. We want to learn to see film in a social and political context—its practical and political uses, the economics of film making and distribution, and the functions of film in America today. We also want to expand the usual realm of film criticism to include video which is more and more often being considered as a screen art.

Finally, we want to develop a political film criticism; that is, a film criticism which does not accept as binding the bourgeois idea that art is somehow separate and detached from the social life of women and men. Films often entertain, but, more importantly, they manipulate our image of people, of our society, of our world. We feel that it is important to reveal this manipulation in our most popular and successful films. We stand for a political film criticism because understanding film has meaning only when we are also trying to change the world.

JUMP CUT has been a cooperative venture from the very beginning; we have received a great deal of help from friends and from people we have never met who saw the need for JUMP CUT. We hope it stays a cooperative effort and, therefore, we ask for your help and suggestions.

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